

FLOORS OF GAS-TAR AND GRAVEL.

In addition to what appeared in our journal on this subject last week, the following description of a second mode, which requires no lime, may be useful:—

SIR,—In answer to the inquiries in *THE BUILDER* a week or two ago, respecting the best method of forming pavements with gas-tar, roads, and covering arches of bridges and cellars, to prevent the penetration of wet, I send you the following formula as used under my direction in various parts of the country, and found to answer the purposes intended:—ten gallons of gas-tar, two bushels of pounded brick-dust or rubbish, two bushels of gravel, sifted through a half-inch sieve, and two bushels of sharp washed sand;—the whole of this composition to be heated in an iron furnace, and kept stirring until it is found to set quickly; after which it is taken out and spread upon the surface intended to be covered about two inches thick, with a wooden hand-float, such as is used by plasterers for stucco work. A heated iron or spudula is passed over it, which brings the tar to the face; after this sift over it some smith's ashes—refuse from the forge. In a short time it will set, and appear like cast iron, and resist all impressions and wet.

Gutters may be formed in a similar manner. Care should be taken the materials are dry before added to the tar; for this purpose I have used an old hot-plate, and dried them at the same time and expense as heating the tar. All can be done by labourers, excepting one man handy with a trowel; and the material will cover a large surface, at a comparatively small expense. I have used it for the covering of arches, bridges, terraces, stables, and sheds for feeding cattle; I have used it on an area of 300 yards, covering basement rooms to a nobleman's mansion in the north of England; no wet has penetrated.

I have seen it used in roads, as your correspondent describes, with the exception of the tar being heated, and the materials of a much heavier metal. The best road that I know of is out of Nottingham to Lincoln, for about two miles, and is of this kind.

Dorking.

WM. SHERRURN.

RESTORATION OF THE GIBBON CARVINGS IN ST. JAMES'S, WESTMINSTER.

REMOVAL OF THE RECTORY-HOUSE.

A few mornings ago, looking into St. James's Church, Piccadilly, which is now being painted and decorated, we found two young men engaged in the restoration of those extraordinary carvings, probably by Grinling Gibbons, which adorn the altar piece there. Chiefly through the wanton carelessness of preceding painters, these fine works had become greatly dilapidated, and the authorities are to be praised for giving timely attention to them.

The carvers in question, by name George Lock, and Kent, working on their own judgment and without drawings, were supplying all the missing parts in the character of the original, and were displaying sufficient skill to entitle them, at a time when we are supposed to have few able operatives in this department of art, to considerable commendation. Mr. E. Wyatt, of Oxford-street, is the contractor.

The following letter deserves consideration:

SIR,—With many fellow parishioners in St. James's, Westminster, I regret very much to hear that the rectory-house, which stood in the church-yard in Piccadilly, and which has lately been pulled down, is to be rebuilt upon the same site, thereby very materially obstructing a view of the church from Piccadilly (one of the most important thoroughfares in London). Can it be possible in this age of improvement such an error should be permitted in the parish of St. James? Our rector has, in the most gentlemanly and handsome manner, offered to relinquish his claim to the ground, upon condition of his being provided by the parish with a suitable residence elsewhere; and if the offer had been responded to in the way it should have been, numbers would have been spared a feeling of considerable regret at hearing that the rectory-house is to be rebuilt on the old spot.

I am, Sir, &c.,
J. A.
23, Great Pulteney-street, 20th Oct. 1846.

THE IRON TRADE.

The result of the late quarterly meetings is so similar to that of those immediately previous, that we might almost refer to what was then said as still applicable to the state of the trade. The previous expectations of an advance, however, have not been fulfilled. The nominal or quarterly meeting price of bars and rails has even been brought a shade beneath 10*l*.; sheets and plates 12*l*. to 13*l*.; nail rods 9*l*. 15*s*. The Welsh and Scotch iron differ very little in price from the English. But these quarterly meeting prices need be held as no criterion of the rate of private sales. We even observe a somewhat lackadaisical admission in one of party papers, that the quarterly list of prices instead of being held as a criterion to be sustained, is actually viewed by many masters more in the light of a beacon to be avoided, so that "one will fix his price at ten shillings, another at twenty shillings, and some even occasionally at thirty or forty shillings less, offering as an excuse, their inability to obtain customers at the same figure" as some houses of high standing. Thus "a serious interference with the customers of those who wish to uphold the prospects of the trade will be experienced," although "the nuisance is on the decline," which, in this era of "universal cheapness," we are very much inclined to doubt.

NOTES IN THE PROVINCES.

THE scheme for erecting four churches in the poorer districts of Glasgow, by means of a subscription to the amount of 20,000*l*., has been so far successful, that 10,500*l*. of the necessary sum have been already subscribed.—The proposed bridge, on Dredge's patent principle, at Weston-super-Mare, to connect the island of Burnbeck, and the proposed pier at the end of it, with the main land, is to be 1,100 feet long and 17 wide; centre span 350 feet; outside openings 275 feet; estimated cost 10,000*l*.; time, six to eight months, to begin as early as possible. The pier, which will be 700 feet long, is to be begun when the bridge is finished.—The newly consecrated parochial church at West Ashton (parish of Steeple Ashton), consists of a nave and chancel, with 200 sittings. It has a tower and spire. The roofs are open, with stained timbers, and the chancel windows are filled with stained glass. A low parapet wall, coped with stone, surrounds the burial-ground. The site, and 1,000*l*. towards the building of the church, were presented by Mr. Walter Long, with an endowment of 100*l*. per annum, to which the Vicar adds a like sum during his incumbency.—The sum of 16,000*l*. is to be appropriated by the proprietors of the Gloucester and Berkeley Canal to the enlargement of the docks at Gloucester.

—The new church and burial-ground for the consolidated chapelry of Melplash parish, near Bessington, were to be consecrated on the 20th.—The old parish church of All Saints, Leigh, Staffordshire, has been rebuilt, except the tower, it is said, as far as ascertainable, according to the original proportions and details.—Although the Cambridge Paving Commissioners had not only agreed to repair the old bridge at the back of St. John's College, at their own expense, but to reconstruct it altogether, on an improved principle too, an amended resolution to "request the clerk to ascertain to whom the bridge belongs," is likely to retrograde the whole of this rather ludicrous affair to the old stumbling point, for at least another winter; the clerk having "failed to discover the proprietors of the same."—There appears to be some hope of Lincoln Cathedral being now cleared of the old erections which conceal the greater portion of its outline.—The corporation of Balby have already so far honoured the credit done their liberality by apportioning part of a field for the site of Miss Banks's church. A subscription of 45*l*. has also been secured.—The Manchester Town Council have been meritoriously engaged of late, as pioneers in the good work of sanitary improvement. Cottage owners in the more densely populated localities have been compelled, under the local act, to make better provision for the convenience and decency of their tenants; courts and alleys have been ventilated; and the proprietors of new buildings have

been compelled to provide their tenements with all necessary appendages; the town undertaking the due cleansing of outhouses, &c.

—The new church of St. Paul, Alnwick, erected by the Duke of Northumberland, was consecrated on Friday, week before last; and the new church of St. Stephen, at the north-east end of South Shields, on Wednesday week; both by the Bishop of Durham.—The Lords of Treasury have agreed to advance 50,000*l*. towards the construction of a floating dock at Limerick.

SANATORY STATE OF BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

AND is it really true, Mr. Editor (as the boarding in front of Buckingham Palace so gravely portends), that more public money is to be expended on this thrice-condemned building,—condemned from its locality,—condemned from its architectural feebleness,—condemned from its want of internal arrangement and accommodation suited to our gracious Queen, and the wants of an increasing royal family?

But it is particularly to the first point of condemnation that I am earnestly anxious to call the attention of your readers, as one of the utmost importance—*i.e.* within a few yards of the palace is a neighbourhood unlighted, unpaved, and undrained, so that the inhabitants are obliged to pump up, or empty into the streets, all the fetid and noxious contents of their dwellings, to be carried off by surface drainage into the nearest sewer, dragging by slow degrees their pestiferous exhalations through the whole neighbourhood. At times, and often in my professional rounds, at an early hour in the morning, have I been so assailed and upset with the horrid stench, as to be compelled to protect my mouth and nose, though not weak of nerve or fastidiously sensitive. I have often thought, too, that did her Majesty but know of the nuisance that so immediately surrounded her, she would hesitate before she perilled her health, and that of the royal family, by reposing within its influence; for it is well known that the deleterious effects of mephitic and noxious miasma operate more certainly and basefully on the system when reposing in its vicinity. Even could Sir James Clarke indulge his olfactory a few mornings at an early hour in this neighbourhood, I would venture to predict matters would quickly take a right direction.

To make the palace what it ought to be, and what every lover of good taste and judgment would wish it to be, or to make it commodious and healthy, is entirely out of the question: much of the filthy neighbourhood that so closely surrounds it should be got rid of; but then the expense would be great, and it would be far better bestowed upon a new palace at once, and since it requires not the gift of prophecy to foresee that the growing increase of public business in the country will ere long imperatively require more public offices, let me venture to suggest what has already been done before, that instead of adding to an inconvenient, incomplete, and unhealthy located palace, that together with the so-called National Gallery, it be applied to the purposes of the business of Government and learned societies, and that the whole length of the palace gardens up to the triumphal arch, be made the site of a plain sound Grecian edifice, as a national gallery of painting and sculpture, to be erected, decorated, and externally embellished by degrees, as the means and circumstances permitted. There is no such site in the whole metropolis beside, and in place of the mis-named Buckingham Palace, let one worthy of the country and the country's means, be forthwith erected on the site of the old Kennington Palace, taking care to keep it well elevated, and out of the ground, not like Buckingham Palace, squatted down, low and mean in appearance, as if half-shamed of the public eye. Indeed, many and great are the improvements I could suggest in this vast metropolis, in which the health and comfort of the people are intimately concerned; and it is the duty, the paramount duty of a good, a wise, and a beneficent Government to watch every opportunity of carrying out such improvements, and not to keep behind the people in public taste and spirit.

I am, Sir, &c.,
PHILO MEDICUS.